

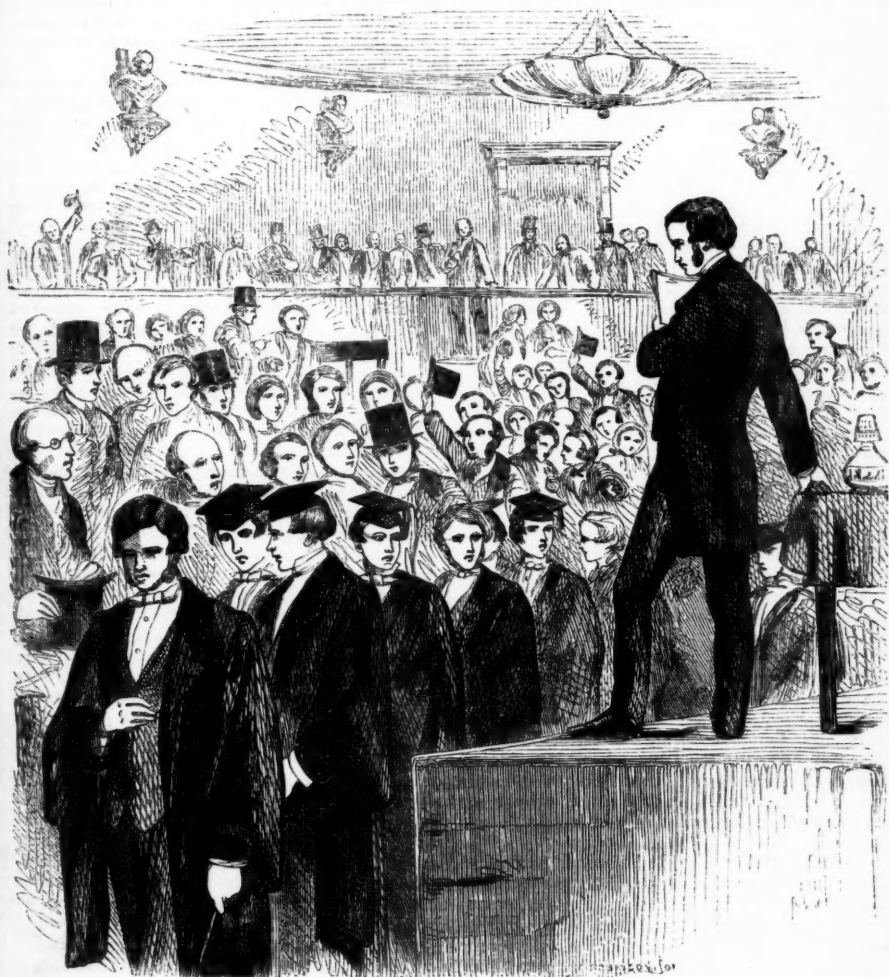
THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 349.]

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1858.

[PRICE 1d.]



THE LECTURER'S PRESUMPTION REDUCED BY HIS AUDIENCE.

THE STORY OF A CLEVER YOUNG MAN.

CHAPTER V.

WE shall now take a rapid survey of the next ten years, beginning from the point at which we con-
No. 349, 1858.

cluded our last chapter, and giving a bird's-eye glance, as we pass along, at the various events connected with our present history. The first of these that we shall mention is the appearance of a little daughter at the Old Grange Farm, whose

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entrance on the scene seemed at once to awaken all the latent energy of Lucy's maternal character, and to excite in her a determination to use every effort which "a wise woman" may for "building her house," and inoffensively counteracting the evils resulting from the unsteadiness of him who should have been its head and supporter.

About the time of little Rosa's birth, Polly Jervis was married to the son of an opulent farmer, and in a few weeks accompanied her husband to Sydney, where he had a promise of profitable employment. She took with her two younger brothers and one of her younger sisters, and left with a promise to her elder brother and three remaining sisters that, so soon as means were given, and an opening for furthering their interests appeared, they should be enabled to follow. In two years the means and the opening came, and Lucy saw the last of her family depart, bidding, as it appeared, farewell for ever to their native land. It was a bitter parting on both sides; but to her, oh! how bitter, had she not learned to "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."

Lucy had long before this commenced the life of active duty to which, at the birth of her child, she had devoted herself; and in doing so she was not without hope that her example might lead Edward to consider the folly, if not the shame, of being ever like a child chasing butterflies, while the real business of life was left undone. Steadily she pursued her work, under the guidance of Lawrence Baily, whose wife was her dairywoman, and who dearly loved his young mistress; and the more so, as he began the more clearly to understand her position, and the total absence of sympathy which she had to endure from that quarter where she might have expected the most. The affection of old Lawrence was returned by Lucy in the very best way—by seeking to open his mind and that of his wife to those precious truths by which her own spirit was kept in perfect peace in the midst of her daily crosses. While Edward was running hither and thither in search of a profitable opening for the employment of his talents, she was quietly and unostentatiously putting her principles into practice, "looking well to the ways of her household, and eating not the bread of idleness." Her fruits, her flowers, her vegetables, the produce of her dairy, all found their way by rail to the London market, bringing back to her the means of supplying all domestic wants, without making any demand upon those resources which lay exclusively in her husband's hands.

At the time when Lucy bade farewell to the last of her brothers and sisters, a little son had been added to the family. Alfred he must be called, Edward said, after Sir Alfred Somebody, whom he had met on some occasion, who had paid him a compliment or two in prospect of an approaching election, and thereby made him his debtor to the extent of calling his son after his name. Edward was very fond of his boy. "Boy" was a title of honour with him, while "girl" was the reverse; accordingly, he had never taken much notice of little Rosa. But what has Edward been doing since we left him, at the close of the last chapter, contemplating the office of an itinerating lecturer?

We shall see, though we can afford little beyond a mere glance.

A scientific society—no matter where—had advertised for a person of accredited abilities to give courses of lectures, at stated intervals, in certain districts (needless to mention), on various subjects, chiefly practical, and in connection with mechanics' institutes and other plans for public improvement. Among the numerous candidates that applied was Edward Allen. Possessed of a striking and, when he chose, a pleasing address, great fluency in the use of well-chosen language, a ready reference to books and authorities, united to a prepossessing person, the committee, who met to examine the credentials and to test the capabilities of the applicants (having no previous knowledge of our hero), were strongly inclined in his favour. One gentleman only hesitated. He observed, that the self-possession of the young man, who had certainly not seen twenty-five, placed at the bar of judgment before utter strangers, all of them many years his seniors, and some of them more than twice his age, and long known in the literary world, seeking an appointment which would bring him under the critical notice of thousands—well, he did not know—he did not wish to pronounce, but he should like something more modest. He was afraid that, if the candidate were tried by phenological tests, he would be found to have a large portion of self-esteem—too large, indeed, for a well-balanced mind. Might it not be well to request him to deliver a detached lecture on some generally interesting subject, which might give them an opportunity of judging how far he was likely to carry out the object they had in view?

To this suggestion the committee agreed; the proposal was made and accepted; the subject was selected, and the time appointed, and, when it arrived, Edward Allen addressed a large assembly, composed for the most part of well-educated, intelligent persons, for the very first time in his life. As he proceeded, looks of astonishment, then of impatience, then of contempt and derision, were interchanged among the audience as they heard, one after another, the names of those who had long held a high place in public esteem, and been considered competent authorities on their respective theories, associated with "shallowness, ignorance, conceit, assumption," etc., etc.; while the lecturer gave nothing, in place of the arguments he contemned, save a few crude statements of his own, the little sense of which was lost amid the redundancy of the words in which he sought to convey it. Those members of the committee who sat in immediate proximity cast looks of meaning one at another, all except Mr. Miller, the benevolent gentleman who had expressed his doubts, and he was far too sorry to find his judgment so speedily verified to look up at all. He undertook, however, to converse with the lecturer on the following day, in the name of the committee.

"It struck me and my brother committee-men, Mr. Allen," said Mr. Miller, "when listening to you last night, that you may be in some degree in the dark respecting the object we have in view in proposing the different courses of lectures set forth in our prospectus. It seemed to us as if you aimed more to expose the supposed errors of former theorists, than to elucidate those practical

and undeniable truths connected with the theories in question. We rather thought you went out of your way to do this, thereby leaving yourself time for little more than a meagre sketch of what you conceived to be the facts of the subject which lay before you."

"It appears to me, sir," replied Edward, "that we can only reach truth by the scattering of error, just as we can only get at diamonds by digging through the mass of unsightly clay which surrounds them, and casting it aside: error is the rubbish which obscures and hides the truth."

"I just mention our view of the case," returned Mr. Miller, taking no notice of his companion's bright figures of speech, "because we fear that, were you to pursue the same plan with respect to the several courses of lectures we have proposed, it would altogether defeat the object we have specially before us."

"I must contend against error, sir, wherever I meet it," replied Edward; "it is quite necessary to the establishment of what I believe to be truth. No committee can compel me to sacrifice my independence of mind."

"And no committee will attempt it, I am sure," said Mr. Miller, with the utmost calmness. "But you will allow me to repeat, that our object is not to expose error, supposing it to exist where you think it does, in any other way than by the elucidation of the truth. There are certain well-ascertained facts in nature, which, although they may have been discovered to be facts by certain individuals, with whose names they have become associated, stand now upon an immovable basis, quite independent of the discoverers. Our object is to have these facts explained, illustrated, and turned to practical account, with the aid of the standard works to which we have been accustomed to refer."

"Standard!" repeated Edward, half aside. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Miller, I am quite prepared to have my words and feelings and motives misunderstood; but you must permit me to say, I have read many books, as many as most persons of my age, I suppose, and those that are considered the best; but I have scarcely met with a work on any subject, which I should think of exalting into a standard."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Miller, looking at him with the utmost astonishment, which gradually melted away into a good-humoured smile, with a touch of pity in it. "Well," he continued in a while, "we can't help it; we must try to make our present standards answer until you supply us with something better."

Edward reddened: he had not forgotten his first literary essay.

"Have you ever exercised your genius in that way?" inquired Mr. Miller, quite ignorant of the essay ever having been made.

"This is no country for an honest man to publish in," answered Edward, with irritation of manner. "It is not truth that people bow down to here, but names."

"There is One Name, my young friend," replied Mr. Miller, "did we bow down to which, with deeper reverence, we should be preserved from many an act of hero-worship, whether that worship be presented to a fellow-being, or still more ignobly offered to the idol SELF. You have read

many books, you tell me, and I believe you have; but there is one BOOK which I presume even you will admit to be a 'standard' in its own department, and that BOOK I fear you have not read, or at least not studied, as its importance demands. Had you made yourself familiar with its contents, you would have found such statements as these on its pages: 'When pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom;' 'pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall;' 'seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him.' I might multiply such passages, but I prefer directing you to the lesson that 'before honour is humility,' by referring you to the teaching and example of HIM who came down to earth in order to free us from the dominion of *self*, another word for *sin*; to breathe into us by his Holy Spirit a new principle, which is in direct opposition to that by which the men of this world are governed: to teach us that 'whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' I shall not detain you any longer, Mr. Allen; I am sorry that I can hold out no hope of our agreeing to accept your services in the line we contemplated; we have no wish to lord it over the judgment or conscience of any one we may employ; but we cannot consent to indorse every opinion which an agent may please to put forth, under the plea of desiring to maintain his independence of mind. One word more: read the book I have referred to more than you have done; study it; search it; inquire out the relation its truths have to yourself. You will thus be delivered from many mistakes, the fatal character of which you may not otherwise discover, until it is too late to escape from the ruin that must follow in their train."

So ended Edward's hopes of obtaining the post of itinerating lecturer to the scientific society. But, as in the case of his "Popular Essay on Chemistry," so he acted now, and, finding he was denied the countenance of any recognised medium through which he might come forth in his true light before the world, he decided to act for himself; and without any supporters but his own merits, he resolved to commence a course of lectures in several of the most considerable towns within from fifty to a hundred miles, avoiding those likely to be occupied by the agents of his quondam friends. Now, it is a fact that there are many who do not turn away with dislike from the tokens of vanity and self-sufficiency. Either they have not penetration enough to read the tokens right, or they see in them only a reflection of themselves, or the weakness is amusing to them, as their own might be to others. And thus it happened that Edward's lecturing labours were not all sheer loss. He was sufficiently popular in most of the places he visited, to enable him to clear his expenses, sometimes to do more; and as there was an agreeable variety in the work, which excited him and kept him in a happy temper, he did not weary of it so soon as he had done of other employments.

After being engaged in this manner for several months, he came to the most important town he had yet visited for the purpose of lecturing. Here his work was for the present to end, and it did

end somewhat more hastily than he had anticipated.

On the morning of the day appointed for the delivery of his first lecture, the following article appeared in one of the daily papers:—"We understand that Mr. Allen, whose lectures on scientific subjects have excited so much interest in various parts of this and the neighbouring counties, has just arrived in our town. Of course our friends will judge of his merits for themselves this evening; and we trust he will receive every encouragement which he deserves." This was ambiguous enough; however, the lecture was delivered as announced, and was well attended and not very badly received. The next morning the daily paper spake more plainly: "Last night Mr. Allen delivered the first of his proposed series of lectures. It was merely introductory, and the subject was, 'The Relation of the Physical Sciences.' We must confess to having been much surprised at the amount of knowledge he has acquired at so early a period of life, for he is still a very young man. It struck us, however, as a pity that his knowledge is not better arranged, and everything made to keep its own place in his mind. It might be well too if, added to the stores he has accumulated, there were a larger amount of self-knowledge. Had he this, we presume he would not mar the effect of his own utterances by thrusting himself forward on every occasion, almost to the exclusion of the subject he professes to have in hand. There is an amusing story related of him, for the truth of which we do not vouch, but it evidently had its origin in the unpleasant habit to which we have referred. It is said that in one of the scenes of his recent labours, when he had closed the last lecture of a series, he announced his intention of giving one additional, and astounded his hearers by giving out, in self-complacent tones, as his proposed subject, 'MYSELF, a study for young men.'

"Since the above was put into type, we have ascertained beyond a doubt that Mr. Allen, who is delivering a course of lectures in our town hall, is the very same person who was summarily dismissed by the — Scientific Society, in consequence of his unwarranted and absurd attack upon the world-wide reputation of men whose names are among the noblest that science can boast. Should he see fit to make such a display of folly here, we trust the students of — College will know what to do."

The students were not unmindful of the hint thus given. Whether, indeed, it had been Edward's intention to go over the whole of his former ground, does not appear. Most probably the negative might be the case; but habit is hard to be overcome, and no sooner had he, towards the commencement of his lecture, pronounced, in rather a light and depreciating manner, the name of one, venerated not alone as a "sage and philosopher," but likewise as a "saint," than—having previously ranged themselves and their trusty friends in the fore front of the hall—the students rose from their seats as one man, and in perfect order quitted the place, followed by loud cheers from the remaining part of the assembly. This was too much for Edward to bear; he became confused, stammered, stopped; then, pleading sudden illness, descended

from the platform, and in terrible agitation hurried from the house to his lodging. Early the next morning, ere yet the inhabitants of the town had risen to the remembrance of what had occurred the previous evening, he was far on his way from the scene of his first public mortification.

But there was one to welcome him at the end of his journey. After what, to her, were long months of absence, Lucy again clasped him in her arms with unabated tenderness and love. Oh! had he even now learned to appreciate the value of that love, and all it might be the means of opening up before him—had he now acted on the earnest admonition of Mr. Miller, all might have been well; but Mr. Miller and his admonition were alike forgotten, and "the book" he had recommended lay neglected on the shelf.

We have passed over many of the projects which occupied the mind and the time of our hero, during the ten years at which we have been glancing, and have perhaps given the reader a very incorrect notion of the order in which those we have recorded took place. Neither the deficiency nor the defect are, however, of any importance. We might have mentioned his opening a select academy for young gentlemen, promising advantages never realized before by any institution of the kind; we might have travelled with him through some of the continental countries, whither he went to learn the manners of the inhabitants, and to make himself acquainted with certain celebrated localities, preparatory to his bringing out a historical romance; we might have detailed his experiments in mechanism, some of which were altogether inventions, and might have been pronounced very ingenious had they been of any use. For one of these he did indeed receive two or three very handsome compliments from men in office, he paying for said compliments an equal number of very handsome bows. The compliments were all that his invention ever brought him—the bows were by no means all that it cost him; and so have vanished ten years—the ten best years of his life lost! lost! lost!

THE SKETCHER IN NORTH WALES.

CHAPTER III.—LLANRWST AND BETTWS-Y-COED.

It is raining steadily, but there is a light breeze shifting alternately to south and west, with a promise of scattering the clouds by and by, as we mount the coach for a drive to Llanrwst along the vale of Conway. The road leaves the town just under the castle walls, and running in no part of the route at any great distance from the river, affords a series of fine views, which in sunny weather must charm the heart of the landscape painter. The scenery, which is at first open and pastoral, with fertile meadows and corn-fields on either bank of the stream, up which a small steamer is navigating as far as Trefriw, assumes a different character as we proceed. We have the advantage, if it be an advantage, of beholding it under an aspect not described in the guide-books. At first the distant mountains are all but buried in a cloudy fog, with the exception of the long-backed Conway mountain to the right, which carries a belt of ragged rain-clouds on its broad

waist, but lifts a succession of frowning peaks out of the drifting mist, and seems to have angrily shaken its mane clear of the scud. After running thus for a few miles, the mountains close in upon the road, and now we catch a number of close views, "bits of landscape," as painters call them, rich in the elements of the picturesque. Now it is a white cottage, or a cluster of cottages set in the thick foliage of the densely-wooded hill to the right; now it is a little rapid, a yard wide, roaring and dashing down its ravine and beating itself to spray among the rocks in its downward fall of five hundred feet, through a channel which it has cut for itself in the mountain side; now it is a tiny hamlet of stone-built cottages, whose walls are six feet thick, built with the "rollers" which the mountain is continually sending into the valley, where women in flat crush hats are knitting socks which they don't wear, and bare-legged children, on the look-out for the coach, are vociferating for alms; now it is a mill snugly ensconced among the trees, the water foaming fussily over the pitchy wheel and tumbling in delightful cascades down the rocky gorge; and now it is only a mill-wheel and a great long wooden spout which comes projecting out of a mass of foliage with a torrent of water in its mouth, which it vomits forth upon the paddles of an overshot fifty feet in diameter, which turns a mill that may be concealed in the bowels of the mountain, for all you know, not the slightest glimpse of it being to be had.

The road, which on leaving Conway is but indifferent, improves as we advance and change the limestone for the slate or slate-stone district. Fortunately, the weather improves too, and, by the time we reach the Eagle at Llanrwst, the rain has abated and there is a watery indication of coming sunshine. The coach stops here an hour, and we have the opportunity of a peep into the old church, where we see the stone coffin of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, son-in-law of King John, some ancient monumental brasses, a curious monument in memory of Sir Richard Wynne, and other rarities, all contained in a chapel designed by Inigo Jones. A pleasanter sight than this is that of the vale of Llanrwst, which we get by crossing the picturesque bridge, and walking for a mile or so on the bank of the Conway river. The view is one of surpassing beauty; it embraces the channel of the river over its rocky bed for a considerable track, and is bounded on either hand and in the extreme distance by lofty mountains of various and picturesque outline.

The promise of fine weather proves fallacious. After leaving Llanrwst a soaking storm sets in, and we are glad to descend from the coach at Bettws-y-Coed, and take up our quarters at the Royal Oak until a more practicable season. And a delightful refuge it proved. Bettws, though we did not discover the fact at once, is, taken all in all, we are inclined to think, the most delightful spot in North Wales. At any rate, the London artists seem to think so; canvases, paint-boxes, and half-finished pictures lie about in the coffee-room; a company of brothers of the easel are domiciled in the house; David Cox, the renowned, has painted the sign without and frescoed the walls within with his own hands; and in the album, or visitor's book, there are drawings and sketches and

jeux d'esprit from a score of names whose beautiful works have long been familiar to the lovers of art.

As the storm is howling above, and it is impossible to go out, we cannot do better, after eating an excellent dinner, than turn over the leaves of the album by the side of a blazing fire, which the landlady has kindly ordered to be kindled.* The book has seen good service, and, we are sorry to say, has suffered from the hands of pirates, but it will well afford amusement for a passing hour. The contributions are of a most varied kind; some from scholars and philosophers, some from poets, and a plentiful allowance from artists, who have been considerate enough to illustrate their intellectual bantlings with their pencils. We shall transcribe one or two specimens by way of sample. The following is part of a description of Bettws, by an artist whose name we do not feel at liberty to print. The reader must not think it too flattering; Bettws is deserving of all the praise, and more:—

"The grace of clustering, pleasant foliage
Thou lack'st not, Bettws!—for thou'rt rich in trees.
Amid the sterile mountain wastes of Wales
'Tis thy peculiar charm. Trees climb thy hills,
E'en to their tops, and fling a garb of green
Across their cold, repulsive nakedness;
Thy circling vales are full of trees that lead
For miles, a covert from the summer sun,
That flashes through the gaps in rustling boughs
Only to chequer and make fair our path.
Words cannot paint thy loveliness, nor tell
Of half thy charms. By those who know thee well
This will at once be yielded; but the world
Will deem thee all unworthy of such praise.
Fairest of spots of which this land can boast!
Thou art as beautiful as heart can wish!
A place to live and die in! Fare thee well."

We gather from these entries that a round number of them were made in rainy weather, and we gather, too, that it rains in North Wales much more and oftener than is agreeable either to artists or tourists. Here is a complaint from a drenched painter:—

"One just begins upon the sky,
And paints its azure brilliancy,
When rise the winds, the air grows chill,
The clouds hang low upon the hill,
Thick vapours congregate on high,
The sun he blinks and bids good-bye:
Th' umbrella bends beneath the squall,
And down go easel, sketch and all."

The angler also is a pilgrim to Bettws, the fishing in the vicinity being excellent. The angler's testimony is of a comical kind. Under a characteristic portrait of the "Conway Fisherman," a brother of the rod has written the Conway Fisherman's Multiplication Table, which runs to the following effect:—

2 rises	make	1 bite.
4 bites	"	1 gleam of hope.
8 gleams	"	1 break.
16 breaks	"	1 small mort.
2 small mort.	"	1 season ticket.
1 season ticket	"	1 five-pound note.

This table needs a commentary, and, for the

* While we were enjoying the fireside at Bettws the thermometer stood at 90° in the shade in London—a fact worthy of notice by the registrars of local temperatures.

benefit of the reader who is not a piscator, we must explain. The waters of the Conway are not free, and can only be fished by those who pay for the privilege. The plain English of the above table is, that once in sixty-four rises—a rise is the leaping of the salmon at the angler's fly—the angler succeeds, not in catching a fish, but in breaking his tackle; that he breaks his tackle sixteen times before he catches a small morm, which is a salmon under four pounds; that he catches two such salmon in a season, and pays five pounds for the right of so doing. The multiplication table is not a bad satire on the angling mania, which leads men to pay a guinea a pound for their fish, and waste their time into the bargain.

As the night draws on, and we sit to a late hour gossiping round the fire, the rain falls a complete deluge. The river Llugwy, which runs past the house, is thundering along its bed with the noise of a cataract, and has already risen several feet. We retire to rest in the middle of the storm, and are lulled to sleep by the monotonous roar of the waters.

On rising next morning, we find the storm subsided into a steady drizzling rain; and after breakfast we set out under an umbrella to view the neighbourhood. Within a few paces of the inn is the Pont y Pair, an old stone bridge, which crosses the Llugwy at a point where it dashes headlong down a rapid, amidst a confused heap of massive rocks indiscriminately piled one on another. The view on either side of the bridge is romantic in the extreme, though each is totally different from the other; above, all is fury, foam, and restlessness; below, the river seems to have spent its wrath, and to be charmed into gentleness by the exquisite landscape amidst which it wanders; and on both sides the valley is shut in by glorious mountains, for the most part wooded to their summits, and, where that is not the case, showing the purple-hued rock strata alternated with patches of the richest verdure.

The falls of the Swallow lie within two and a half miles of the village, and, after such a storm, now is the time to see them: we take to the road, therefore, and in less than an hour's walk up the most delightful valley, come within hearing of the boom and bellow that proclaim their vicinity. But we have yet a mile to walk before we come to the little gate in the wall which leads down to the point of view. Here we find a sturdy Welsh dame conning her Welsh hymn-book, while her daughter is crocheting at her side; the mother is the guardian exhibitress of the falls, and leads on down a steep causeway and winding flight of steps through a pine thicket to the best outlook. The noise is deafening, and the woman's communications are all a dumb show. The river Llugwy at this moment is so full that the entire fall is one white wall of foam, rising to a height of not much less than a hundred feet. The motionless points of intervening rock, which in ordinary seasons form each their little cascade, are all submerged in the furious, boiling flood, as it comes down with a blast like the prolonged peal of artillery, and a force which shakes the solid earth. The effect is all the more striking to the view, that the still water below, taking the colour of its bed, is of a deep umber hue, contrasting vividly with the

snowy foam. We have taken post on a rock which projects towards the centre of the river; and as we look upon the mad, tumultuous mass, the conviction steals upon us that a waterfall was never painted yet, and is not, indeed, representable by the skill of the painter. Gazing intently, we see distinctly, over the whole descending surface, a double fall; there is the descent of the vast body of water propelled by the force in its rear ever rushing on, which can hardly be said to *fall*, but is shot down with a rapidity far exceeding that due to gravitation—and there is the descent of a thinner or shallower stratum, partly foam accumulated in the rapids above, which falls only with a gravitating momentum, and through the transparent veil of which, as it spreads out into a filmy, gauze-like curtain, the denser body of the cataract is seen darting swiftly down. Again, outside this thin filmy veil, there is a kind of network of delicate gossamer, of pale and purest white, which is scarcely seen to fall, but which breaks itself into a thousand grotesque yet exquisite forms, is now rolled up and cast outwards in gouts of airy foam, now dissipated in light flakes, and now borne aloft on the breeze, to dissolve in invisible spray and dew.

Leaving the rock, we ascend to the upper level, and watch the descent of the watery volume into the abyss. Here, however, we reckon without our host, for the blinding spray allows us but a glance of the seething pandemonium before we are driven back for want of breath, and almost sodden to the skin by the insinuating moisture.

By the time we get back to the Royal Oak, we are ready for the salmon and the chickens prepared for dinner; and having done due honour to them, we take a seat in a car and drive off a few miles in another direction, to see the falls of the Conway.

The road to the Conway Falls leads across the Waterloo Bridge, a handsome iron structure which spans the river Conway with a single arch (but which ought never to have been tolerated in North Wales), and then, turning to the right, ascends the side of a mountain range, which for a considerable part of the way commands a view of the valley of the Lledr, one of the tributaries of the Conway, which it joins not far from Bettws. The view up this valley is one of the sweetest pictures on which the eye can rest. Deep down in the bottom the Lledr, sparkling like a chain of diamonds, flashes back the sunlight; and its sinuous course is traceable mile after mile, shimmering among the dark rocks—now lost to view, now gleaming forth again, until it finally vanishes in the guise of a thin flash of light amidst the haze of conflicting lights and shadows that fill up the distant chasm of the gorge. In the foreground, the tops of ten thousand trees, of all varieties and of densest foliage, form a leafy slope swelling gently upwards from the lowest level. On either side, the hills rise one above another, crowned with verdure to the top; and far away over all towers the broad grey mass of Moel Shabod, whose vastness veils Snowdon from our sight, and which, far more picturesque in form than that monarch of the ranges, takes a new outline at different points of view.

There is no guardian exhibitor at the Conway Falls, and we have to explore them for ourselves.

The car stops at a stile in the stone wall to the right of the road, whence a path hardly plainer than a sheep-track leads to a wood, whose every trunk is covered with moss and lichens nourished into fatness by the perpetual dew of the falls. These are of a character entirely different from those of the Llugwy at the Swallow. The Conway runs through a narrower channel, and the waters, descending a declivitous course ere they reach the ridge, and being much greater in volume, are seen to dash down with greater impetuosity. The noise is a fierce detonating crash, rather than a roar; the foam is a cream colour, deepening to a warm brown in the centre, except upon the very outer surface, where the same snow-white filaments are tossing about in play, and breaking away into shreds and wind-borne flakes. Half way down, the fall is broken by a second ridge, and against this there leans a vast mass of the dark rock, some hundreds of tons in weight, which divides the descending stream into two very unequal portions, and these again are broken and subdivided by lesser masses ere they reach the pool beneath. The fall may be viewed from a dozen different points, and the visitor should be in no hurry to quit the spot, lest he lose the best parts of the varied picture. Below the fall, at the distance of perhaps half a mile, the river rushes at a furious rate down a steep channel, which in the course of ages it has excavated for itself in the solid rock. The sides of the rock are cut sheer away, as if with a knife, to the depth of forty or fifty feet—a result which is plainly due to the action of the impetuous torrent, and to the heavy masses of sharp angular stone which in times of flood it carries along with it. The scenery near the falls, on either bank, is of a bold and romantic character: sharp rocks shoot upward from the soil, and overhang the seething channel of the river; but everywhere the trees abound; the birch, the ash, the beech, the dwarf oak, the pine, have shot their roots into the ground, or spread them in gnarled knots over the lichened stones; the dense moss yields like a soft cushion to the foot; colossal ferns fringe the ponderous fragments of rock, and on every hand the fox-glove rears its graceful spires and shakes its tall pyramids of crimson bells in the balmy breeze.

On returning to the road we find our car has disappeared, and we are not under the necessity of returning at once to Bettws. Accordingly, we proceed in the direction of Penmachno, which leads us away from the loftier mountain ranges, and opens into a pastoral district much resembling that of Devon in the neighbourhood of the Dart. At intervals the crystal streams come bubbling down the hill and cross the road we are pursuing; the angler is busy in these little tributaries, and the speckled trout are falling victims to his cunning. Towards evening we retrace our steps, meeting with no other adventure on the return than a rencontre with a rather singular specimen of Welsh thrift and industry. This is an old dame clad in russet, with a spotted kerchief round her neck, a crush bonnet on her head, and a pair of ponderous brogues on her feet. Over the bonnet she carries a sack-bound burden of some thirty pounds; on her back hangs a wallet containing on a moderate estimate half that weight; she bears

a big basket full of household goods on one arm; and thus comfortably accoutred in the height of summer, she plods up a steep ascent, and knits away at a stocking as she goes: the force of industry, we should say, can scarcely go further than this. We are unfortunately denied the opportunity of profiting by the conversation of so exemplary a person, for on politely wishing her a good afternoon, the only reply we elicit is "dim Sassenach," by which we learn that she understands "no English."

Next morning, while waiting for the coach which is to take us to Llanberis, we make some further explorations in the neighbourhood of Bettws. We climb the hill at the back of the village and enjoy a glorious view of the vast mountainous track leading away towards Snowdon, and watch the fugitive clouds as they hurry past under the influence of a breeze, which we are glad to note at last blows duly from the south. Then we descend and wander on the banks of the Llugwy, and watch an artist at his work as he transfers to his canvas the winding river, the green forest depths, the rocks and the mountains, now all lighted up by the warm sunshine. Then we stumble on an old mill by the river's brink, the very beau ideal of the picturesque, but the fee-simple of which would hardly fetch twenty pounds at Garraway's, so old, worn, and dilapidated is it in every part. The walls are of huge unwrought stones, a yard thick; there is a veritable grove of vegetation on the roof; the old mill-wheel is slimy with weeds and water-moss, and has surrendered half its rotting splashboards to the force of the stream; the door hangs on one rusty hinge; and within there is an old crazy machine, shrouded in fluff, and agonizing in the pangs of dissolution, in the vain attempt to roll out filaments of wool, to be spun into yarn. It rolls them out, not in whole pieces, but in fragments, each a finger's length or so; and these an aged, silent crone gathers in her shrivelled hands, tremblingly piecing them together, to feed a spinning-wheel, which a phantom of a man is turning in the loft overhead. This solitary pair, it would appear, constitute the entire establishment of mill-owners and manufacturers; and they probably find a vent for their produce among the surrounding villagers, whose staple employment for female fingers seems to be that of knitting. We are speculating on the fortunes of this couple, and retracing their imaginary history to the music of the murmuring Llugwy, now subsided to its natural channel, when suddenly "the twanging horn is heard on yonder bridge," the coach drives up, we mount to the roof, and in another minute are gaily bounding over the finest possible macadamised road on our way to Llanberis.

THE LITTLE AQUARIUM IN THE PARLOUR WINDOW:

ITS FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FISHES, STAR-FISHES, AND SEA-URCHINS.

CHARLIE had, from the very commencement of our aquarium adventures, wished to place a number of fish in the vase; but for some weeks I resisted this desire, fearing lest they should prove destructive to the

smaller animals. However, at length we determined on making the experiment, and we found that a few fishes of very small size were often interesting inhabitants, and thrived very well. They never grew very fast, and I am inclined to believe that all animals grow much more slowly in the aquarium than in the sea.

Taking our net and bottles, we went down to the rocky pools to search for fish. We knew that we could at any time find plenty of those fishes called by the fishermen the father lasher, and by the naturalist, the spiny cottus (*Cottus bubalis*). On several occasions when we had explored little sea caverns covered with large brown matted sea-weeds, on lifting these up with a stick, the cottus, and other common species included under the general name of rock-fish, had darted out from their hidings. All kinds of fish, fitted as they are for preying on the animals within reach, and largely endowed, too, with a good appetite, are apt to prove unpeaceful companions; and we felt it necessary to the general tranquillity, to admit none which were more than an inch and a half, or at most two inches long.

A cottus very soon darted from under a ledge in the rock, and others were shortly seen making their escape as fast as possible. It must be confessed that this fish has a most unamiable and almost repulsive countenance, yet, when in the aquarium, one is amused by its very love of fun and mischief. When fully grown, and seven or eight inches long, and its large head covered with strong spines, it seems fit for all the ill doings which its countenance would suggest. Charlie used to say of these fish, that they looked as if making grimaces at us; and really the large, dark-greenish black eyes turned up at us a look as of fierce defiance; and if we only touched the fish, it would swell out its gill-covers, and set up its spines in the most fierce attitude of anger. A friend of ours, who, being engaged in the construction of a pier, occasionally descended into the sea in a diving-bell, said that when he was at the bottom of the water, and saw these ugly fishes staring at him with their large dark eyes, and then witnessed the continual coiling and twisting of the large rays of the star-fishes, he felt—strong and brave man though he was—as if his blood curdled at the sight of them. Our fishermen take good care how they handle the large-sized father lasher, and the fish is not eaten on our coasts, though a common article of food in the countries at the north of Europe.

We were some time before we could procure a cottus which exactly suited us. Sometimes these fish were too large, at others they eluded, by their activity, all our skill in fishing; but at length we succeeded in catching a small specimen. He was of rich deep brown colour, mottled with dark purplish brown; the head very large and spiny, the body of paler tint beneath, and tapering off at the extremity toward the fan-shaped tail. The eyes were greenish-black, with a yellow iris, and one could discover that they saw things at a glance. When first put into the aquarium, our fish hid among the sea-weeds, and as we found some of these sadly rent the next day, we accused him of the mischief. But he was too bold an animal to remain long in concealment, and it was most amusing to see him lying in wait and suddenly darting on the marine animals. The food of this fish consists of minute crabs and shrimps; but specimens of this animal have lived for months in our vase, fed only twice in the week on small pieces of meat, which they would take from our hand. Our cottus seemed to be at enmity with every living thing; but though he snapped continually at prawns, shrimps, and anemones, and bit off little pieces of sea-weed, yet he did no real harm to anything but the serpulæ, whose rays he sometimes nipped; while he glided about continually with great agility and

grace, and would in the evening follow the light of a candle all round the aquarium.

After all his cunning devices, our poor little fish became a prey to a very peaceful-looking creature, the gem anemone. We had gone out one day, leaving the cottus as usual full of mischief; and greatly did we marvel, on our return, to see how he had been over-reached. There was his tail standing right up out of the mouth of the anemone. His head had been bitten off and swallowed, and his body was soon cast forth into the water. We immediately removed his remains, but were sorry to lose the amusement which had been afforded by his cunning tricks, which had made us forget his ugly face and mischievous intentions. We afterwards had other small specimens in the aquarium, and though mischievous little fishes in their habits, yet we did not find that they did us much more harm than others, while their great playfulness in the water, and their ingenious attempts, often delighted ourselves and our friends.

"Shall we take some sticklebacks?" said Charlie, when we were searching for fish; "they are very pretty with their green, and pink, and silvery colours." But I knew well that some kinds of stickleback were too fond of fighting to be suitable inmates for our vase.

"I should like," said I, "to have some of those pretty little mackerel midges which come in shoals so near the shore, and which I have sometimes kept for a few hours in a basin of sea water."

These are pretty, slender little creatures, scarcely more than an inch long, and something like a tiny mackerel. We afterwards took several of these little fish, catching them in the water which was in a bathing machine; but even the longest lived among them survived its removal for a single day only; and they are so very fragile that the slightest contact with anything rough seems to injure them.

Another fish, which was for some time a very pretty addition to our pets, was the common plaice (*Pleuronectes vulgaris*), which is a flat fish, white beneath, but faintly marbled above with brown, and spotted with bright orange. Full-grown specimens of this fish are kept in larger tanks, like those at the Zoological Gardens; but of course very small ones only can be expected to flourish in a small aquarium. Our little plaice was about an inch and a half long, and so thin that, as it moved about in the water, one might have fancied it had been cut out of lawn paper. Its movements were very elegant: it would swim along in the water with a slow, graceful motion, sometimes narrowing itself in a remarkable manner. Now and then, if alarmed by a finger or stick being put into the vase, it would dart a few times up and down, but it soon recovered its self-possession, and floated along with its usual grace. It never became at all tame, but always seemed a gentle fish compared to the cottus. Like all the flat fishes, however, it spent most of its time in lying at the bottom of the water beneath the pleasant shade of the sea-weed, and would sometimes remain for days without allowing itself the recreation of a sail.

As the weather became warmer, the little plaice in our aquarium became more idle than ever, rarely stirring from his seclusion except when worried out of it by our impatience; and he died after two or three weeks. Numbers of these fishes lie about our sandy shores, feeding chiefly on sea-worms, small crabs, shrimps, and even little fish. A friend of ours, who opened a plaice, found that he had lately breakfasted on a large number of small shell-fish, which yet lay quite undigested in his stomach.

We had, for a few hours, a black goby, or rock fish (*Gobius major*); but young as it was, it seemed so ready to attack its companions, and so voracious a fish,

1. Place.

2. Black Goby.

3. Spotted Gummell.

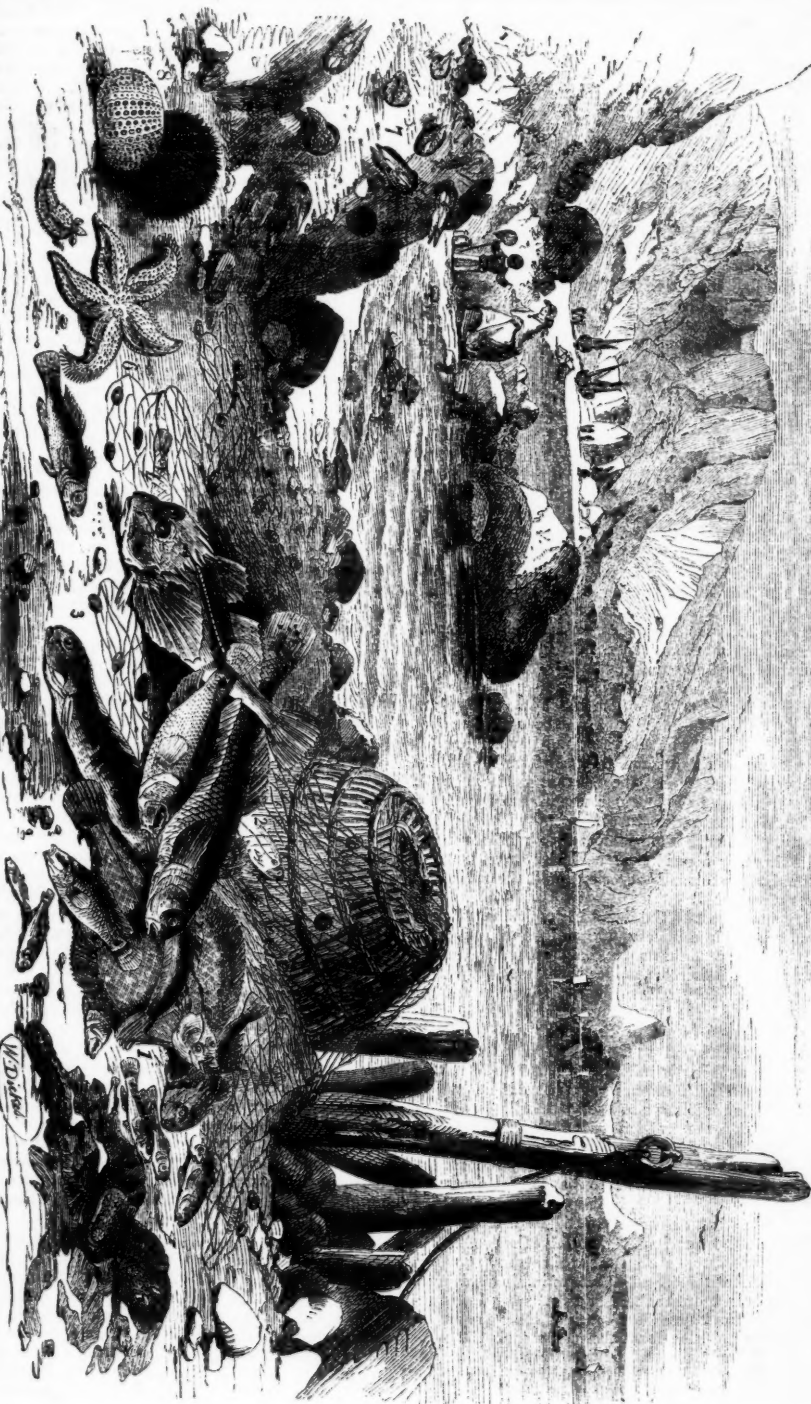
4. Father Tasher.

5. Corkwing.

6. Five-fingered Star-fish.

7. Stone-piercer.

8. Sea-urchin.



that we returned it to its native sea. But the most rapidly moving fish which we ever gazed upon in our aquarium was a little spotted gunnel (*Blennius gunnellus*), which glides about in the water in a wavy manner like an eel, but which has not a rounded body like that fish. The first specimen which we took of this kind was too large for us, and, as we discovered this fully when we first saw it in the aquarium, we determined to take it out again. But it was easier to resolve this than to effect it; and Charlie and I spent a whole hour in trying to get it out of the water. Several times we had the fish between our fingers, but it was so active and so slippery that we could not hold it, though at length we succeeded in jerking our poor little fish over the edge of the glass vessel; but it did not soon lose its activity, even when lying on the table. A smaller fish of the same kind lived in the water for some weeks. The name of butter-fish, by which the species is often called, is very suitable, for the slimy substance on the skin of this fish is very abundant, rendering it an almost impossibility to hold it even in a wet cloth.

As has been said before, our vase was too small for us to venture on grouping many fishes, or admitting even one that was fully grown; but certainly a few small fishes added very much to the beauty of our little aquarium, even though they seldom lived with us more than a few weeks, except, indeed, the spiny cottas, which we have had for months. A neighbour of ours, too, is very proud of a beautiful wrasse, or corkwing, which he has in a vase larger than ours, and which has flourished there in perfect vigour, exciting in us a great desire to possess one of these beautiful creatures. It is the *Labrus cornubicus* of the naturalist, and known from other fish by a large dark rounded spot on the tail, just above the fin. This spot is always conspicuous, whether the fish is swimming or at rest, and in a specimen not two inches long is larger than the head of a pin. The corkwing is of greenish hue, darker on the back, and having purplish brown spots on the fin and tail. Neither mouth nor eye is very large, so that the fish has rather a gentle than a voracious look, and our friend has found the gentleness of its nature to correspond with its physiognomy. We have often admired it; and it is living still, swimming a good deal, and with most graceful motion, but occasionally reposing amid the miniature groves of sea-weed.

Very small must be the star-fishes which are allowed to find a home in a little aquarium in a parlour window. Not that, so far as we could ascertain, they at all injured the living creatures there, save very small shrimps, which they will swallow. They will also eat crabs, but they leave the anemones unmolested. Unless these creatures are of very small size, they will, however, tear and pull up the sea-weeds, and these are hardly ever sufficiently thick in a small vase to be rent and destroyed with impunity. We had on two or three occasions specimens of the common cross-fish or star-fish, called the five-fingered Jack (*Asterias rubens*), hundreds of which, in either a fresh or dried state, lie about our shores at low water, and are on some spots so numerous as to be carried away for manure. This animal has, in its proper condition, five pointed rays; but no surprise need be excited if, on looking into the aquarium, you perceive the necessity of removing one, two, or even three of these rays, which the star-fish has thrown off—perhaps in his displeasure at having been brought there, or as an expression of resentment at the impertinent touch of some companion in the water. These dismemberments spoil the symmetry of the animal so entirely as to render it an unpleasant object, for although the limbs will grow again, yet this process is slow. Those who wish to watch

these animals should therefore bestow on them a separate dish of water, and vegetation; and it is well worth the while of one who has, or who has not, an aquarium, to place two or three of these star-fishes within reach of his observation. There they may be seen ever curling and twisting about, and the minutest parts of their structure in a constant motion. Much may be seen by the unassisted eye, but a good naturalist's glass reveals wonders of structure well deserving a little patient attention. The upper part of these rays is rough and spiny, but underneath them are an immense number of little tubes, each being tipped with a minute sucker. These little organs, when the animal climbs, as it soon will do up the side of the vessel, seem moving about like countless multitudes of tiny worms; and the suckers, by adhering to the glass, enable the star-fish to crawl gracefully over the smooth surface. These suckers also furnish the animal with its means of seizing the prey; and probably few, save very large marine creatures, would be able to escape from the clutch of the full-grown star. We removed ours from the aquarium before they were an inch long, but Charlie often amused himself at their expense, by turning some, which he kept in a dish, over on their backs at its base, and seeing how they used one or two of their arms as a lever on which to rest, while they jerked themselves over into their proper position.

We have often had, for a time, in our little "world of waters," some pretty little specimens of sea-urchin, but we have reason to think, both from our own experience and that of others, that these animals will not live a great while in a small aquarium. It is well worth while, however, to introduce them, even though their residence is temporary, for they seem perfectly inoffensive, and offer a most interesting subject for examination. There are many of these sea-urchins found on different parts of our coast, the most frequent being the common sea-urchin (*Echinus sphæra*), which is usually of a reddish purple colour, with whitish spines. When fully grown, the globular shell is twelve or fourteen inches in diameter; but specimens placed in a small vase should be scarcely larger than a marble. The shell of this animal is thickly covered with spines, each spine proceeding from a little wart-like tubercle, which, when the spines are removed, are seen to be placed in rows on the shelly globe.

It was very amusing to watch our sea-urchin climbing up the sides of the aquarium, and Charlie and I have sat looking for half an hour at a time through a lens, at this wonderful little creature. Each spine is fixed on its little raised dot by what is called a ball-and-socket joint, so that it can turn in all directions. Between the rows of spines are two furrows full of small holes, and from each opening protrudes a little clear tube, which looks as if made of glass, tinted with delicate lilac. It is a little longer than the spines, and has a small sucker foot at its extremity. To watch this animal, when on its way, is indeed to be looking on a moving mass, for there seems to be thousands of spines and sucker-feet issuing from the whole of its body. No wonder that, with such a walking apparatus, our sea-urchin makes quicker progress than any of the living creatures which creep over the rocks or the glassy walls which bound them.

Then, on looking closely through our glass, we find that, besides these organs of locomotion, our urchin has a number of little stems of a purplish colour, placed between the spines and suckers, which are in constant motion too, and are tipped with little claws, composed of two fingers, which are for ever opening and shutting. The use of these little stems does not seem to be clearly ascertained by naturalists; but when we mark how wonderfully the organs which

we can understand are fitted for their uses, we feel assured that these, too, have an important purpose. The shell consists of twenty rows of plates, most exquisitely fitted, and at the upper part of the globe is the urchin's mouth. We need no microscope or lens to see his pearly white teeth, and Charlie would often delight himself by putting a piece of coralline or seaweed over the urchin's mouth, which was readily caught, and so firmly held that he could swing the little animal about in all directions. This sea-urchin is a hungry little creature; it nibbles sea-weeds and corallines, but we are not sure that it swallows them; and it evidently likes a portion of animal diet, since, when it could find no shrimps or crabs small enough for eating, it would eat our offered meat. In its native sea it catches its prey by bringing all its array of suckers to bear on it, and these suckers are believed to prove fatal in their touch, while the victim is soon devoured by the teeth, which are not only very sharp, but are set in jaws moved by most powerful muscles. Our little sea-urchins proved harmless inhabitants, but we should be sorry to trust a large one among our shrimps and anemones.

Many other animals besides those which we have named may be kept, either permanently or for a short period, in small vases; but our object has been in these papers to narrate the actual experiences of a small aquarium. The marine animals assembled in our vase were not of the most rare, but of the most common description, and chiefly such as might be collected during summer at any part of our coast. We have told the adventures of our Aquarium in the Parlour Window, and it is still in excellent condition; but we have not told—for we can never tell—how much pleasure it has given us. Nor is it a mere idle pleasure. The God who made all these living creatures, and made them so beautiful, surely intended that the higher order of his creatures, to whom he has given the powers of perception and reflection, should survey them with admiring gratitude. The poet, when he looked up at the heavens, found solace in the thought that

"The God who rolled the stars along
Spake all the promises."

And it is a thought of this kind which adds so much to our enjoyment in the contemplation of Nature, and renders it so encouraging, so heart-sustaining. We know that these inferior creatures, when they die, perish altogether; and yet God has cared for their beauty, their sustenance, and their pleasures. But man's immortal spirit, which shall yet live somewhere when earth itself has passed away; that spirit whose hopes and longings are infinite; that spirit whose eternal happiness God's Son died to secure—shall God ever, for one moment, forget its thoughts and yearnings, while caring for the mortal and minute creature? Let us look on Creation with joy and hopeful trust, praising God still more for the Book which tells of our eternal destinies, and reveals in fullest, clearest language, the means of the soul's salvation.

A MORNING WITH PICTURES.

It is a sultry morning in June, not long after the breakfast-hour, when we enter the exhibition rooms of the Royal Academy, to see, if it may be, what our artists have been doing during the past year. Early as it is in the day, we are disappointed in the expectation of finding "ample space and verge enough" to take an easy and leisurely survey. Multitudes of other persons have come with the same expectation, and the rooms are quite suffi-

ciently crowded to render the inspection a labour as well as a pleasure. The reason is that this year, although many of our chief painters do not exhibit at all, and Landseer has but one finished picture, yet the average of pictures is better than usual, and many of the best are of a decidedly popular character. Our limits will permit us to mention but a few of them, and we must not be charged with making an invidious selection if we confine our remarks to a very small number out of the eleven hundred and odd which make up the entire collection.

Foremost in attraction is No. 218, "The Derby Day," by W. P. Frith. It has been found necessary to guard this single picture with an iron railing, to fence off the crowd of gazers, and it is not without considerable difficulty that we obtain a position which enables us to view it. Having never witnessed the spectacle of which it is so wonderful a representation, we obtain our first experience of the race-course from the picture itself. Of its fidelity there cannot be a doubt, and the tale it tells is as well worth attending to, as it is better learnt from the canvas than from the actual scene. A full description would furnish materials for a bulky pamphlet: on an area of about two square yards, there are literally tens of thousands of figures, cunningly grouped, representing at once the wildest confusion in the mass, with thorough distinctness in the details that go to make up each separate scene. The several chapters in the story are painted in the foreground, and the background is a multitudinous sea of heads and hurrying figures carrying out the vivid action of the piece, even to the furthest distance. The artist has forgotten nothing; all grades of society are limned with wondrous dexterity, and both extremes of the scale are mingled together. The fashionables in their open carriages are drawn up in expectation of the coming race; youth, and beauty, and luxury loll in easy state on the soft cushions; and there below, stealthily crawling beneath the wheels, the starving vagabond child of the London slums is in the act of filching the refreshments. The tumbler on the grass is performing for the amusement of the gentry, but the tumbler's child, who should be turning a somersault in the air, is casting a hungry eye on the viands set forth for his patrons, and forgets his lesson. The gamblers are at their dirty work in full riot. The "card-trick" is robbing the cunning, and the "thimble-rig" is plundering the simple: there stands a youth of seventeen, thoroughly emptied and moonstruck at the magic of the "little pea," which has cleaned him out to the last sixpence; even his watch and guard-chain are gone, and you see them in the hand of the knave who has stripped him; and nothing is left him but the consciousness of his own stupidity, and even of that he has not quite got possession yet. There is the jovial-faced countryman who wants to try his luck, and who is sure that he can pitch on the thimble that covers the pea, but whose sweetheart knows better, and wisely draws him away from the temptation. There is a world of fun and folly besides; and all is painted with a marvellous dexterity and truth in detail, which leaves nothing in this respect to be wished. This is a picture which will be viewed with different feelings by different spectators.

Those who affect the folly, the vice, and the riot of the "turf," will like it for one reason; those who have no such predilections may praise it for another—for assuredly a profound moral speaks from this living canvas.

A picture to which we turn with greater pleasure, though it be less remarkable for artistic power, is No. 384, "Eastward Ho!" by H. O'Neil. The scene is the gangway of a transport vessel, leading from boats in the river to the deck above. There is historical as well as domestic interest. The vessel is on the point of starting to India with a regiment; the soldiers have taken leave of their wives and friends, and the parting groups are descending the gangway to the boats. There is the widow who has lost her husband in one battle, and has sent forth her son to another, and whose little orphan daughter is now her sole companion. There are lovers in the last embrace. There is the tearful wife taking her last adieu, with the happy, gleesome babe bounding in her arms. There are mothers, in silent prayer for their sons—and all this witching pathos and wordless agony is contrasted with the hard, bluff faces of the old Thames watermen, and the material roughness of blocks, bolts, and the solid oak ribs and rigging of the vessel. Such a picture is a part of the history of our time. It brings the realities of the war in which we are engaged home to every heart, and it is no marvel that people stand mute before it, and turn away with a sigh instead of a criticism.

Allied to the above picture is another war subject, infinitely more painful—"In Memoriam," by J. N. Paton, No. 471. The scene is that horrible human slaughterhouse at Cawnpore, the moment before the carnage, when the doomed women and children hear the footsteps of the murderers rushing to shed their blood. We shall not describe it; the bare remembrance of its harrowing suggestiveness is distressing, and almost makes us wish that the memory of that day could be blotted out for ever.

No. 20, "General Bonaparte on his Voyage to Egypt, 1798, holding a Discussion with his Savants," by C. Lucy, though not by any means a picture of the highest class, tells its story well. Bonaparte is on the deck of his vessel, L'Orient, surrounded by his philosophising friends. They have been advocating the doctrines of materialism; the young general has a detestation of these frightful doctrines, and will not hear of them. Starting to his feet, and lifting his hand towards the beautiful evening sky, "You talk in vain, gentlemen," he cries; "who made all that?" The anecdote will be in the recollection of most of our readers: it is so well illustrated by Mr. Lucy as to be understood in all its circumstances, even at a momentary glance.

No. 204, "The Missing Boat," by F. Stone, is a sorrowful romance of the sea-coast. The fishermen have returned from their night's cruise, but one boat is absent. There stands the wife of the absent owner, with her eyes straining into the far distance, and that blank look, half abstraction, half doubt, struggling against despair, which tells of the agony within. There also sits the mother of the absent one, nursing the babe which may be an orphan; and around are friends and neighbours busy on their own affairs. An old sailor is sweeping the horizon with a telescope, and others are

listening to hear his report. Perhaps, after all, the missing boat may turn up in good time to calm those weary hearts.

No. 272, "A listener never hears gude o' himself," by T. Faed, is a charming interior of Scottish cottage life, full of beautiful drawing, and of exquisite yet subdued colour. The listener at the door is a gawky loon, who has written a declaration to the bonny lass within. She is reading the letter (and laughing mischievously the while) to her favoured swain, vastly to his content, as you may see by the giggle in his face. What sort of a reception the listener will get when he comes in is foreshadowed by the fate of his dog, who has entered and got the worst of it in an encounter with the cat. The lassie's conduct is hardly lady-like; but that was not to be expected, perhaps, under the circumstances.

No. 372, by A. L. Egg, is a domestic tragedy of the painfulest kind, in three scenes. In the central scene an unfaithful wife hears her infamy exposed, and is struck prostrate by the blow. The household is broken up; the husband dies; the children are left desolate; the wife, abandoned of all, is driven to wretched courses. A few years have passed—you see the children in poverty in a squalid attic; and in another compartment the mother, in the last stage of destitution, is cowering under one of the dark arches of the Adelphi, her sole shelter from the night.

No. 512, "The Press Gang," by A. Johnston, is a really capital picture. Tom, the Chelsea waterman, has been to church to be married, and is coming away with his wife of half an hour, when he is met by a press-gang, and summarily hauled off to serve his Majesty on board a man-of-war. Another young couple in the rear, seeing what is taking place, are scampering off as fast as possible, and will make good their escape. The picture is famously painted; what is wanted is a little more earnestness and intensity; the chief of the press-gang is hardly ruffian enough for his trade; Tom himself is not sufficiently moved at the fate before him and its advent at such a crisis; and his new-made wife testifies too little alarm. When we look at this scene, we are lost in wonder that Englishmen of Tom's thews ever submitted to a tyranny so monstrous.

No. 536, "The Return of the Prodigal," by A. Rankley, is unhappily a tale of all times. The heir of the house has abandoned himself to dissipation, extravagance, and vice, and has been cast off. His conduct has broken his mother's heart, and she has gone down in sorrow to the grave. In the depths of his misfortune, misery, and self-wrought degradation, the conscience of the prodigal has awakened once more, and he has come back to cast himself on the mercy and forgiveness of his sire. That he *will* be forgiven you see in the looks of the father and of the mourning sisters: that the old love will ever revive is not so plain; and in this the artist is right—

"For neither frost, nor storm, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been."

No. 180, "The Maid and the Magpie," by Sir E. Landseer, is an exquisite picture of a country girl milking a cow. The magpie was probably an

afterthought, put in to give the picture a name, and is evidently in a place where such a fellow would not be likely to be found in such company. But the picture is a noble performance, magpie or no magpie, and full of life and vigour, with that absence of all violent effort which marks all Sir Edwin's works.

No. 562, by H. Wallis, represents a stone-breaker at the road-side, who has died at his toilsome drudgery—time, deep night-fall. This picture has been described as *the* picture of the season; it is gloomy to look on, but is elaborate in finish, and is evidently painted with a thorough knowledge of the phenomena of light and darkness, and the mysteries of colour. Its chief value, however, is its depth of pathos, and the stern lesson it imparts to the thoughtful beholder. There is a startled weasel on the turf by the dead man; and the pall that shall cover him is the long low bank of grey clouds; but there is the promise of the dawn of a brighter day in the glimmer beneath it.

No. 1089, by J. Brett, is another stone-breaker, not dead, but vigorously alive, and hammering away as becomes a man who is at work on the hardest flints. Whatever may be the proper relative position of this picture as to its artistic merits, we have no hesitation in saying that, in one respect, it is the most remarkable picture in the Academy, or in any other exhibition of the season: it is, far beyond all others, the most minutely finished. Every flint, and each fragment of a flint, is a complete study; the grass, the soil, the milestone with its cryptogamic shroud, the thistles shedding their down—all are unrivalled in elaboration. Then away from the foreground there is a glorious landscape, every square barleycorn of which is as elaborately wrought out. Photography on paper never went so far—the daguerreotype on a polished plate could scarcely go further. The scene is partly a precipitous hill, in which the chalk soil crops out at intervals, and the right-hand slope of which is densely wooded. The trees sleep in their shadows in the sun-lighted emerald sward, and the eye seems to wander among them, ever making some new discovery. Over all, in the transparent ether float feathery ranges of summer clouds softly cradled in the bright white haze, and a sense of ineffable stillness seems to brood over the whole vast scene. And yet this picture will hardly strike you at three paces distance; you rarely see a person looking at it, and so quiet and modest is its tone, that it is probably passed over by nine-tenths of the visitors to the gallery.

We are now almost at the limits assigned us, and must mention more summarily a few remaining pictures which we had marked for notice. Among them are "Sunday Evening," by Webster, which needs no description, and will commend itself to the sympathies of all; the "Weary Life," by Carrick, No. 300, a scene full of feeling and serious suggestiveness; the "Flower Girls," No. 350, by J. C. Horsley, a very telling contrast of town and country life, in favour of the latter; "The Huguenot Conventicle Suppressed," No. 862, by J. Ritchie, a fine picture, in which, however, the figures are subordinated to the wild landscape; the "Coast Boy Gathering Eggs," by J. C. Hook, No.

453, a spectacle of daring boyhood and a piece of veritable nature; "Benjamin Franklin at his Work," by E. Crowe, No. 570, in which the future philosopher and statesman is seen rejecting the beer of the publican in favour of a more temperate beverage; and two pictures, painted by command, of interviews and ceremonies between the Emperor of the French and Queen Victoria, by E. M. Ward.

In landscapes the exhibition is, as usual, rich. Among the finest are those of Linnel, remarkable for their force of colour and marvellous comprehensiveness of subject; and those of Creswick, as remarkable for their cool and quiet effect. In one of these, and, to our thinking, the best, representing a ford across a river, the cattle are by T. S. Cooper; this picture is perfect as a work of art, so far as perfection is to be estimated by the sense of truthfulness derivable from a painting. Of landscapes with cattle there are the usual quota, with Cooper at their head, as in years past. Stanfield has some magnificent pictures of foreign scenery; and David Roberts contributes ecclesiastical interiors, and views of Venice, which rank midway between the close matter-of-fact of Canaletto and the misty imaginativeness of Turner. Of fruit-pieces there are two by Lance, and two, no less deserving of praise, by Duffield, who, if we recollect rightly, was Lance's pupil, but has now overtaken his master. Among the flower-painters, Miss Mutrie deserves the palm, and, if we are to judge by the progress she has made within the last few years, will yet deserve it better and retain it long.

Here, however, we must draw bridle—*Cetera desunt*.

LIGHTNING-RODS.

TAPERING above each lofty building of importance in our isles, one generally meets with a lightning-rod; and inasmuch as the philosophy of those protectors of life and property is not so generally diffused as might be desired, some few explanations may not come amiss to the readers of the "Leisure Hour."

In times gone by, when the nature of thunder and lightning was unknown, the terror created by them must have been great indeed. No wonder: even now, when their nature is no longer mysterious, and the means for limiting the danger of their consequences are obvious, thunderstorms, next to earthquakes, are perhaps amongst the most dangerous natural phenomena to which mankind are subject.

Strangely enough, soon after the discovery of lightning-rods, some people were averse to their employment, on the plea that it was impious to attempt any interference with one of God's own agencies; as if it were reconcilable with Infinite Goodness that man should debar himself from the adoption of any safeguard against evil which Providence might have permitted him to be exposed to. Another party objected to the employment of lightning-rods on mistaken physical grounds, lest the rods might attract lightning, which would have otherwise failed to take effect. Nobody objects to the adoption of any safeguard against evil now; but the attractive objection, as one may call it, still lingers among the public, and begets much

evil. Let me therefore announce, and that with all the authority I can command, reflecting the sentiments of our great Corypheus of lightning-conductors, Sir William Snow Harris, that no conductor, however excellent, has any power to *attract* lightning. A lightning conductor simply opens a channel for electricity to escape, just as a gutter or a sewer opens a channel for the escape of water. However full of water a gutter may be—however conveniently arranged for carrying away the water—one cannot with any propriety say that the gutter has attracted the water; and thus, substituting lightning for water, is it with lightning conductors.

Having in this way knocked one error on the head, let us serve a second in similar fashion, and a third after the second. The reader has probably heard of thunderbolts. An old lady, assuming an air of mystery, presented to me, a few days ago, a shining metallic-looking lump, which she gravely informed me was a curiosity—no less than a thunderbolt. I was sorry to undeceive her. I explained that thunderbolts existed only as figures of speech; that really there were no such things; and as for the cherished specimen her liberality would have contributed to my mineral store, it was neither more nor less than a compound of brimstone and iron, termed *mundic*, and which may be obtained by the waggonload in certain parts of Devonshire and Cornwall. Undoubtedly, masses of heavy substance have been known to fall from above. Sometimes the fall may have been accompanied by thunder and lightning, but quite as frequently without them; and in no case have the thunder and lightning had anything to do with the falling "meteoric," for by that name these sky-stones are designated.

The next error which I shall ask the reader to attack with me, is one which he will be perhaps slow to regard as an error, so completely has a certain idea taken possession of our heads. Who has not heard of the electric fluid?—nay, who has not heard of the dispute, long prosecuted by electricians in former times, as to whether there existed in nature one or two electric fluids? Well, it is now the prevailing opinion with electricians that there is no such thing as the electric fluid; and that if in future we speak or write of such, that speaking or writing must be understood in a strictly conventional sense. Certain it is that we have no demonstration whatever of the existence of an electric fluid or fluids. There does not exist an electrical phenomenon which cannot be as well explained without the assumption of a fluid as with it; nay, in respect of certain phenomena, the assumption of an electric fluid considerably embarrasses an investigator.

It is almost unnecessary at this time to point to the fact, which most educated people are acquainted with, that Dr. Benjamin Franklin proved the identity of electricity and lightning, by flying a kite during a thunderstorm, and conducting electricity down through the wetted string. An electrical kite is usually described as a kite, the string of which has a metallic wire passing through it. Dr. Franklin's electric kite was not, however, of that sort: the string had no wire passing through it; indeed, the wire expedient would have been exceedingly dangerous.

As we have agreed to adopt the now prevalent opinion as to the non-existence of an electric fluid, yet nevertheless speak of the passage of electricity, the reader may very naturally desire to have that seeming contradiction explained. I cannot better comply with his desires than by asking him to set up on a table a row of card-houses, then, striking the end one, observe how one after another they all topple over. The operation of falling being continuous, might convey the idea of a current to an observer placed a little way off; and the general notion is, that the so-called passage of the electric fluid is a somewhat analogous case of disturbance or toppling over of the particles of a conducting body. It is almost a pity the existence of an electric fluid is not demonstrated. The assumption of such a fluid aids the young electrician very much in the proper comprehension of electrical phenomena; and I shall not be at all surprised to find myself employing that term occasionally, notwithstanding my disclaimer.

Electricity, whether a fluid or a motion between particles, or what not, is able to pass through the substance of certain bodies, but it is obstructed almost completely by others. Hence has originated the division of bodies into electrical conductors and non-conductors. No positive demarcation, however, exists between the two. The very best conductors oppose some impediment to the transmission of electricity, and the very worst conductors can transmit it a little. Of all electrical conductors, metals are the best; and copper stands very high amongst the metals, higher, indeed, than either iron or steel, which I am aware is opposed to the general impression. Silks, woollen stuff, atmospheric air, glass, brimstone, and india-rubber are amongst the most familiar examples of good non-conductors.

Applying these electrical facts, the practical question now arises, How best to protect edifices and ourselves from the ravages of lightning? The most obvious suggestion is to surround them with non-conductors—ourselves with blankets, for example. The extent to which an application of this sort can be made is very limited; and there are, moreover, objections to it which would occupy more time than I can afford in the description. Adopting a gross similitude—which, however, is expressive enough—a man might wrap himself in a waterproof coverlet, and lie down in a water-course for a period, without getting wet through, but the water would conquer in time. Far more radically protective would it be to establish an outlet for the water.

Practically, then, the best way to deal with lightning and render it ineffective consists not in warding it off by non-conductors, but in giving it free scope of exit by conductors; and herein is comprised the philosophy of lightning-rods. Electricity, whether from thunder cloud or other source, never does harm so long as it suffers no impediment. For example, if it were possible to erect a small wire high up into the sky during a thunder storm, and passing downwards through the powder of a magazine, thence into the earth, the electricity passing through the inadequate metallic conductor would act comparably to water endeavouring to pass through a water-course of inadequate dimensions—it would flow over, and

the magazine would probably be exploded. Had a metallic bar sufficiently large taken place of the wire, no accident would have occurred to the gunpowder, even though the metallic wire had passed quite through it.

It is in the adaptation of lightning-conductors to ships that the greatest difficulties have had to be encountered and surmounted. In one respect, however, the problem of protecting ships from the lightning stroke was easier than the protection of land buildings. Underneath a ship, when floating on its element, there is an illimitable waste of conducting waters; once succeed in conducting the electricity of a thunder cloud down to the water's surface by a bar of adequate size and adequate power, and the ship's safety is insured.

At first, even supposing the prejudice concerning the attractive force of conductors not to have prevailed amongst naval authorities, difficulties would have been experienced in applying permanent lightning-conductors to ships. The masts of a ship have a telescopic action one upon the other, as is well known. An ordinary conducting-rod, therefore, placed against the masts, would have been incompatible with the free sliding of the latter. A chain conductor might be indeed used, but with hardly less inconvenience, if permanent, to say nothing about the inferior conducting qualities of the link construction.

Before the period of the adoption of the permanent conductors, devised by our great electrician Sir William Snow Harris, the chain, temporarily hung, was the only form of marine conductor employed. When a thunderstorm seemed to be imminent, the lightning chain was rigged, to be taken down again after the storm had passed. Setting up the chain conductor was an operation of frightful danger for those who had to accomplish it. Many cases are on record of sailors killed whilst thus engaged; and instances, still more numerous, occurred of the destruction of ships, notwithstanding the system of supposed protection.

The principle of Sir William Snow Harris is as follows. He causes to be imbedded in each one of a ship's masts a flat band of copper, in such manner that whether the masts be elevated or depressed, the metallic continuity, in an electrical sense, still remains perfect. Bold in the teachings of electric science, Sir William Snow Harris takes no care about leading the lower end of the conductor overboard. He does not fear to conduct it quite through the structure of a vessel, and if any point of convenience were capable of being achieved by leading a conductor through the powder magazine of a ship, the great electrician, I am convinced, would not hesitate to do so. A comparative view of the accidents which occurred to vessels whilst the old chain conductor system was in vogue, and the accidents which occur to them under the fixed conductor system of Sir William Snow Harris, is expressive enough in its way; but more expressive still are the published records of lightning-struck ships, provided with the improved apparatus. Any one who does not know to what extent the terrors of a thunderstorm in tropical seas exceed those tamer phenomena of thunder and lightning familiar at home, would incredulously read the accounts of fire-sheets blazing down the mast, fire-balls

darting about, loud reports like the discharge of great guns, and other terrific accompaniments of thunder-storms on the tropical seas.

A vessel adequately provided with permanent conductors may be considered lightning-proof for the future. I do not like to assert that an instance has *never* yet occurred of a ship's being damaged by lightning in defiance of the protective system devised by Sir William Snow Harris, but I believe this to be so. A somewhat extensive acquaintance with nautical records, and the progress of electricity, does not bring one unfavourable contrary instance to my memory. This is saying a good deal in favour of fixed lightning-conductors on shipboard, and it furnishes a standing example of God's benevolence in permitting man to subdue the fierce violence of an agency, the most inscrutable, perhaps, as to its nature of all which surround us.

"GRAPES IN THE WILDERNESS."

IN Hosea ix. 10, the Lord says, "*I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness.*" He is telling of his gladness in finding these lost sheep, his delight in taking them up when they were wayward, sinful, wandering souls. It gave him great joy to save them. It was as refreshing to him as is a cluster of grapes to a traveller in the weary wilderness, whose lips are parched, and whose eyes have long rested on barrenness, and who hails with satisfaction and delight the sight of a vine and its juicy grapes. Dr. Livingstone gives an instance of this feeling:—"In latitude 18 deg. we were rewarded with a sight which we had not enjoyed for a year before, large patches of grape-bearing vines. There they stood before my eyes." The traveller thus gives utterance to his delight: "The sight was so entirely unexpected that *I stood for some time gazing at the clusters of grapes* with which they were loaded, with no more thought of plucking than if I had been beholding them in a dream." Be sure, young reader, that the Lord Jesus will welcome your return to him. No fear of his casting you out. No: your coming will be to him as pleasant as are grapes in the wilderness to a traveller; the very sight of your first arising to go will be as when the eye of the traveller is gladdened by the green leaves and hanging branches of the vine. And surely you cannot do anything more really satisfying to the Lord than bringing others, as Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus. You are bringing, as it were, grapes to the lips; you are giving joy to God, who waiteth to be gracious. He has infinite pleasure in souls that return to him and live.

DELIGHTING IN GOD.

IT much honoureth God, when the hopes of everlasting joys do cause believers to live much more joyfully than the most prospering worldlings: not with their kind of doting mirth, in vain sports and pleasures, and foolish talking, and uncomely jests; but in that constant cheerfulness and gladness which becometh the heirs of glory. Let it appear to the world that indeed you hope to live with Christ, and to be equal with the angels. Doth a dejected countenance, and a mournful, troubled, and complaining life, express such hopes? or rather tell men that your hopes are small, and that God is a hard master, and his service grievous? Do not thus dishonour him by your inordinate dejectedness! Do not thus affright and discourage sinners from the pleasantness of the service of God.—*Baxter.*

Varieties.

THE CUNNING THRUSH.—There is much more intellect in birds than people suppose. An instance of that occurred the other day at a slate-quarry, belonging to a friend, from whom we have the narrative. A thrush, not aware of the expansive properties of gunpowder, thought proper to build her nest on a ridge of the quarry, in the very centre of which they were constantly blasting the rock. At first she was very much discomposed by the fragments flying in all directions, but still she would not quit her chosen locality. She observed that a bell rang whenever a train was about to be fired, and that at the notice the workmen retired to safe positions. In a few days, when she heard the bell, she quitted her exposed situation and flew down to where the workmen sheltered themselves, dropping close to their feet. There she would remain until the explosion had taken place, and then return to her nest. The workmen observed this, narrated it to their employers, and it was also told to visitors who came to view the quarry. The visitors naturally expressed a wish to witness so curious a specimen of intellect; but as the rock could not always be blasted when visitors came, the bell was rung instead, and for a few times answered the same purpose. The thrush flew down close to where they stood, but she perceived the change, and it interfered with the process of incubation; the consequence was, that afterwards, when the bell was rung, she would peep over the ledge, to ascertain if the workmen did retreat; and if they did not, she would remain where she was.—*Literary Journal*.

KIND WORDS.—They never blister the tongue or lips. And we never heard of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They help one's own good nature and good will. Soft words soften our own soul. Angry words are fuel to the flame of wrath, and make it burn more fiercely. Kind words make other people good-natured. Cold words freeze people, and hot words scorch them, and bitter words make them bitter, and wrathful words make them wrathful. There is such a rush of all other kind of words in our day, that it seems desirable to give kind words a chance among them. There are vain words, and idle words, and silly words, and hasty words, and spiteful words, and empty words, and profane words, and boisterous words, and warlike words. Kind words also produce their own image on men's souls. And a beautiful image it is. They soothe, and quiet, and comfort the hearer. They shame him out of his sour, morose, unkind feelings. We have not yet begun to use kind words in such abundance as they ought to be used.—*Pascal*.

VORACITY OF THE PIGEON.—There was shot lately in the neighbourhood of Inverness a wood pigeon, in which was found the enormous quantity of 1100 grains of wheat, barley, and oats, together with 40 grains of peas; the barley grains predominating. This seems to be no unusual case. There was some time before that another killed on a neighbouring farm, in which were found 70 grains of peas, with a very large quantity of the different grains already mentioned; but the precaution of counting them was not taken. It is stated, however, that the bird was full to the very bill. Such quantities by a flock of 190 to 200 of these destructive birds must be very considerable in the course of a whole harvest season, particularly since some ornithologists maintain that such are the digestive organs of pigeons that they are capable of partaking daily three times their own weight of food—a most extraordinary fact, if true. It is needless to add that the extermination of such birds must be highly desirable on the part of the farmer.—*Inverness Courier*.

LATIMER AT SCHOOL.—Hugh Latimer, the son of a Leicestershire farmer, born in or about 1472, was first sent to a grammar school, and afterwards to Cambridge. Of his family circumstances, Latimer has left us this interesting record:—"My father," he writes, "was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walks for a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine.

He was able, and did find the king a harness, with himself and his horse. I remember that I buckled on his harness when he went to Blackheath-field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now. He married my sisters with five pounds, or twenty nobles each, having brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor; and all this he did of the said farm."—*Timbs' "School-days of Eminent Men."*

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY.—A lady who had the charge of young persons not of kindred blood, became on one occasion perplexed with regard to her duty. She retired to her own room to meditate, and being grieved in spirit, laid her head on a table and wept bitterly. She scarcely perceived her little daughter seated quietly in the corner. Unable longer to bear the sight of her mother's distress, she stole softly to her side, and, taking her hand in both of her own, said, "Mamma, once you taught me a pretty hymn:—

'If e'er you meet with trials
Or troubles on the way,
Then cast your care on Jesus,
And don't forget to pray.'

The counsel of the little monitor was taken, and relief came. The mother was repaid for rightly training her child, by having her become her own blessed teacher. "Out of the month of babes and sucklings God has ordained praise."—*Sayings of Little Ones*.

EFFECTS OF MOONLIGHT.—Professor Piazza Smyth, the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, in his interesting account of a recent scientific expedition, made by him to the Peak of Teneriffe, has set at rest the vexed question of the heat of the moonlight. He says that his thermometrical instruments were sensibly affected by the moon's rays, even at the lowest of two stations occupied by him in different situations. In tropical climates meat, which is exposed to the moonlight, rapidly becomes putrid; and in the Indies the negroes, who will lie sweltering and uncovered beneath the full glare of a tropical sun, carefully muffle their heads and faces when exposed to the moonbeams, which they believe will cause swelling and distortion of the features, and sometimes even blindness.

FINICKING HABITS OF A BAT.—Both my bats were very particular, not to say finicking, about their personal appearance. They bestowed much time and pains on the combing of their fur, and specially seemed to value a straight parting down the back. It was most interesting to watch the little thing parting its hair. The claw was drawn in a line straight from the top of the head to the very tail, and the fur parted at each side with a dexterity worthy of an accomplished lady's-maid. The same habit has been observed in other bats that have been tamed.—*The Common Objects of the Country, by the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A.*

ANECDOTE OF SHEEP.—As a curious illustration of the stupidity of sheep, a person driving a flock of them through a dirty lane in Liverpool, they were met by somebody coming in the opposite direction. For a little time the whole made a stop. At length one, more venturesome than the rest, made a sudden effort and leaped over the person's head. All the rest of the sheep followed the example of the first, though it cost them considerable exertion; while, if they had made the smallest bend to the right or left, they might have got forward without trouble.

ILLUMINATING MATERIAL.—It has been found, by experiment, that lights of the same intensity, from different substances, take different periods to vitiate the same quantity of air, by converting it into carbonic acid. Rape oil, 71 minutes; olive oil, 72; Russian tallow, 76; stearic acid, 77; wax candles, 79; spermaceti candles, 83; common coal gas, 98; cannel coal gas, 152. Thus the cannel coal gas is proved to be the most healthy to burn.

Rest satisfied with doing well, and leave others to talk of you what they please.